

## Folic Acid Intake Tips

Follow any one or more of these simple tips to increase your daily consumption of folic acid.

- ✿ Aim for at least 5 servings of colorful fruits and vegetables each day.
  - ✿ Eat at least 3 or 4 servings of dark green, leafy vegetables per week.
  - ✿ Make beans the main component of a meal.
  - ✿ Try a fortified cold cereal that contains 100% DV folic acid.
  - ✿ Take a multivitamin containing 100% the recommended folic acid intake (400 mcg) every day.
- OR
- Take a folic acid supplement every day.

**Note:** To prevent anemia, choose a folic acid supplement that also contains vitamin B12.

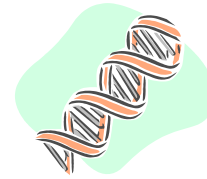


## Folic Acid Facts

### What is folic acid?

Folic acid is:

- a B vitamin, like niacin and vitamin B12
- the synthetic form of *folate* that has been added to fortified foods and used to make vitamin supplements
- often used interchangeably with “folate” because once in the body, the two forms of the vitamin (natural and synthetic) have the same biological effects



### What does folic acid do?

In the body, folic acid:

- helps prevent birth defects
- may prevent heart disease and certain types of cancers
- may protect against depression and decline in cognitive functioning
- is involved in the synthesis of DNA and RNA, the genetic materials in every cell
- is necessary for cell division and replication
- helps in the formation of mature red blood cells
- prevents a type of anemia called megaloblastic anemia
- is involved in metabolism of homocysteine, a compound associated with heart health



### Where can I get folate or folic acid?

*Folate* is naturally found in the following foods:

- beans and other legumes
- dark, leafy greens
- enriched wheat, flour, and cereal grain products
- whole grain bread and cereal products, wheat germ
- citrus fruits like oranges
- other colorful fruits and vegetables
- liver



*Folic acid* can be found in:

- fortified cereals
- supplements of folic acid (often with vitamin B-12)
- most multivitamin supplements



Dietary Folate Equivalents		
Food	Serving	DFEs
Breakfast cereals w/100% DV	varies	400
Lentils, cooked	1 cup	358
Kidney beans, cooked	1 cup	230
Great Northern beans, cooked	1 cup	181
Beef liver, braised	1 slice: 2-3 oz.	172
Avocado	1	163
Garbanzo beans, canned	1 cup	161
Asparagus, cooked	½ cup	134
Spinach, cooked	½ cup	132
Romaine lettuce, raw	1 cup, shredded	64
Spinach, raw	1 cup	58
Broccoli, raw	1 cup	57
Mustard greens, cooked	½ cup	51
Enriched white bread	1 slice	43
Orange	1 medium	39
Strawberries	1 cup, whole	35
Grapefruit	½ 3-4" fruit	16
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	14
Potato, baked, no skin	1 2X5"	14
Potato, baked	1 skin	13



## Folic Acid Facts

### How much folic acid do I need?

The current Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for folic acid for men and women age 14 and older is **400 Dietary Folate Equivalents (DFEs) per day**.

Since 1998, government regulations have required enriched grain products, including flours, breads, pasta and corn products, to be supplemented with folic acid. This helps ensure that Americans get some folic acid in their diets from products that would not otherwise contain the vitamin.



**Fortified breakfast cereals** containing folic acid are a convenient way to get your daily dose of the vitamin. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/cereals.htm> for a list of cereals with 100% of the RDA, or look at Folic Acid content on the Nutrition Facts Label on the side of a cereal box.



## Folate Food Ideas

### Spinach Strawberry Salad

Add chopped strawberries and fresh or canned orange slices to a bed of washed baby spinach. Sprinkle with wheat germ and toss with slivered almonds and a fruity vinaigrette for a folate-rich sweet salad!

### Stir Fry

With a little cooking oil, sauté fresh or frozen chopped broccoli, asparagus, and spinach with beans for a colorful main dish served with enriched or whole grain rice or pasta.

### Guacamole

Add chopped tomatoes, peppers, and onions to mashed avocado; mix well and use as a topping for nachos, tacos, and burritos or as a sandwich spread to spice up a BLT!

### Citrusberry Smoothie

Blend orange juice, frozen strawberries, wheat germ and yogurt or milk in a blender until smooth and have a delicious, folate-packed snack or breakfast-to-go.